

REMARKS

The present application was filed on January 18, 2002 with original claims 1-12. In a preliminary amendment, claims 1-6 and 8-12 were amended and new claim 13 was added. In an amendment dated June 4, 2003, claim 1 was amended.

It was brought to the Examiner's attention that, contrary to the Examiner's position, none of the Figures of Girondi showed that the support plate 22 was in contact with the inner surface of the filter body 10. Although Girondi states that apertures 22a provide "free passage between the first chamber 31 and the third chamber 33", Girondi does not state or require that the apertures 22a are the only passage between chamber 31 and 33.

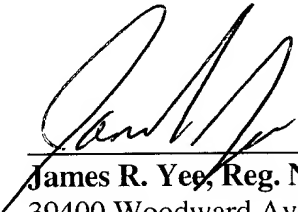
Therefore, Girondi does not teach nor suggest a support plate "having an outer periphery which engages the inner surface of the filter body" as required by claim 1.

Examiner Savage was unconvinced and no agreement was reached. Applicants' Attorney stated that a response to the Final Office Action would be filed shortly. The Response was filed on October 24, 2003.

Respectfully submitted,

HOWARD & HOWARD ATTORNEYS, P.C.

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James R. Yee, Reg. No. 34,460
39400 Woodward Avenue, Suite 101
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48304-5151
(248) 645-1483